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Watson's Art Journal.

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SECOND PERFORMANCE OF DANIEL.

The second performance of George F. Bristow's fine Oratorio, *Daniel*, by the Mendelssohn Union, took place on Thursday, the 30th of December, before, we are sorry to say, a rather small audience; a fact to be accounted for by the insufficient advertising, and by the absence of Madame Parepa, whose illness compelled her to relinquish her original part in the work. But these drawbacks had no influence upon the performance, which was, in most respects, far more satisfactory than on the first occasion.

"*Daniel*" is essentially a dramatic subject, and in this view Mr. Bristow has treated it after the modern rather than the ancient models, and has produced a work replete with strong effects, rich in melodic and harmonic progressions, assisted by free and sometimes florid instrumentation, but never descending lower than the high standard of sacred song. The work bears the mark of strong individuality; every motive is unmistakably the clear inspiration from the subject, for in their beauty and heartfulness they exhibit a spontaneity which could only result from genuine impulse. The after treatment is of course calculated; and it is by no means an easy task to work out a fine thought with level excellence. Mr. Bristow has done his work conscientiously; he has carried each thought out to its full limits, and although he sometimes sacrifices effect for form, he rarely closes with an anticlimax. His recitations are really musical oratory, so finely are sentences phrased, and so full of declamatory power is their setting. The vigor of the voice part is fully sustained by the orchestration, which is ever varied, ever emphatic.

The instrumental introduction is a broad, sombre thought, massively carried out by calculated imitation; but relieved by a melody so simple and yet so free from sensuousness, that it well carries out the idea of the wail of a whole people in their captivity. The opening chorus in unisonous Recitative, will inevitably recall the opening of "*Elijah*," but only as to form,—only as to using a means allowable to all, as an effect—for subject and treatment are entirely Mr. Bristow's own, and beautifully, by ingenious counterpoint, has he imitated the complaint of many people. The constantly occurring phrase, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem," is plaintive and touching in the extreme. The chorus, "O that the Salvation of Israel," is fresh and original, free in melody and varied in imitation. The whole scene, from the chorus of the Israelites—"They that trust in the Lord," to that of the Babylonians—"Cast them into the fire"—is replete with dramatic force and strong characteristic contrasts. The finale to the first part is extremely beautiful; the first part replete with the deep yet tender sentiment of God's abiding love; the second, a free fugal movement, a more active expression of faith in his mercy and justice. The chorus of Holy Children, with soprano solo, is a beautiful thought, worked up with grace and earnest-

ness, and the chorus, "The Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," has not been excelled for depth of expression and solemn beauty. It is a master-piece in thought and treatment—an inspiration as rare as it is inestimable. The last chorus, with its clearly-worked fugue, and its bold, emphatic movement, is a worthy close to a work so replete with beauties.

One of the most charming features of the Oratorio is the concerted music for male voices. Flowing in melody, rich in harmony, and free in counterpoint, it needed but a fair interpretation to achieve a decided success. But its performance was very bad indeed, the singers being not only uncertain, but constantly out of tune.

The solos have all marked characteristics, and all are melodiously treated, but free from levity. A spirit of elevated purity pervades them all; few who heard it, will forget the beautiful Aria of Daniel, "Blessed be the name of God," so instinct is it with the essence of praise. Viewing the work as a whole, we find it homogeneous; its construction is artistic, presenting contrasts which offer rich and varied coloring, and a level of writing which is always in accordance with the elevation of the subject. It exhibits learning, spontaneity, and a depth of religious sentiment which at times rises to an inspiration. It is treated orchestrally with solidity and brilliancy; it shadows some new and beautiful effects, and in the use of the resources of the orchestra, Mr. Bristow displays a thorough knowledge and a master's hand. It is a work which will rank his name among the classics, and will assuredly perpetuate his fame, for it will live with the few other great choral works which the world endorses.

Miss Maria Brainerd, who undertook at a very short notice the music originally sung by Madame Parepa-Rosa, acquitted herself most admirably. We never heard her voice so true and pure. She was evidently upon her mettle, for she sang her music with so much fire, accuracy and enthusiasm, as to cause us not to regret the absence of Parepa, excepting for the cause of that absence. Her efforts were warmly appreciated, and Miss Brainerd added much to her reputation by this performance.

Miss Charlotte Hutchings also deserves our hearty commendation for the faithful and charming rendering of the music allotted her. We have rarely heard her beautiful voice to greater advantage. Messrs. Hill, Thomas and Trost made praiseworthy efforts to do justice to the music, but they were not as successful as we could have wished. The Mendelssohn Union fully sustained its reputation by its choral performance on this occasion. The members evidently exerted themselves, *con amore*. The performance was not faultless; some choruses were sung perfectly, others were only well done, but through all the desire to do was evident, and the slightest behest of the conductor was followed implicitly. The light and shade of the performance proved how careful had been the drilling, and we must confess that, considering the brief time accorded the singers for study, the Mendelssohn Union gave evidence on this occasion of an efficiency which promises for it a brilliant future.

The author of the Libretto has done his work well. His selections were judiciously made, affording those contrasts of sentiment which give vitality to a subject. The work in the original consisted of three parts, of

which the present Oratorio takes in but one, and embraced the whole career of Daniel. Its length, however, compelled its dismemberment, but it is not improbable that Mr. Bristow, at a future day, will complete it in a musical form.

THIRD CONCERT OF THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

The most numerous audience that we ever saw within the Academy of Music, attended the third concert of the 26th season, on Saturday evening last, February 1st. To say that the house was full would be to say less than the fact; for not only was every seat taken, but all the available standing room was crowded, so that not a sight of the inside of the auditorium could be gained, and even the stairs leading to the upper tiers were occupied by individuals evidently of a resigned and patient nature. It is said that over four thousand people visited the Academy on the occasion of the third Philharmonic Concert, and that between two and three thousand dollars were taken, independent of the subscription. This is the result of vigorous and energetic action; the people see that there is life in the organization, and come forward freely to sustain it.

The programme was as follows:—

PART I.

Overture, "*Jessonda*," SPOHR.
Concerto, *for the Piano*, in A
minor, Op. 54, R. SCHUMANN.
Allegro—Affettuoso—Intermezzo—Allegro—
Vivace.

MR. S. B. MILLS.

PART II.

Beethoven's Ninth (or "Choral") Symphony,
in D minor, Op. 125.

(A) *For Orchestra alone*: Allegro ma non troppo. Scherzo molto vivace. Adagio molto e Cantabile, alternating with Andante Moderato.

(B) Finale, for Orchestra, with Chorus and Quartet of Solo, closing with Schiller's Ode "To Joy."

Spohr's solid and masterly overture was played with great spirit and emphasis; the stringed instruments came out with a swelling mass of sound, that satisfied the ear completely. We never heard the work so satisfactorily performed; it was a clear and beautiful rendering worthy of all praise.

Mr. S. B. Mills executed Schumann's Concerto in A minor, very finely. He is thoroughly familiar with the work, having played it frequently during the past few years, and has all the passages at his fingers' ends. His interpretation was highly artistic, and his mechanism was as near perfect as possible. Uncertainty with him seems a thing impossible; he has achieved a precision, an exactitude altogether exceptionable. All the bravura passages were brought out in strong relief, clear, sharp and decisive, and the movement *affettuoso* was a fair example of delicate and refined execution. The whole performance was worthy of the high reputation Mr. Mills has won, and was well and warmly received by the public. The Concerto is a fine work, and is most effectively instrumented. It is hardly necessary to say, that full justice was done to it by the orchestra.

The performance of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, known as the Choral Symphony, was orchestrally, a superb performance. We have rarely heard more perfect unity than this large body of instrumentalists pre-